

## **A PRESCRIPTION FOR POWDERY MILDEW**

**By Albert Ford**

**(adapted from the November –December 1991 MRS Newsletter)**

Those who read regularly the literature on rose culture will have run across a treatment for mildew on roses consisting of spraying with bicarbonate of soda. There is a current report that Cornell University had performed some recent tests with positive results.

The earliest reference I have found suggests the practice originated in Russia. Jesse A Currey, the originator of the International Rose Test Garden in Portland, Oregon, wrote in 1922 of a visit from Professor Arthur de Yacenski, a Russian plant pathologist, as follows:

"Professor Yaczenski told me that they had found the treatment for mildew to be a spray of bicarbonate of soda, dissolved in water in the proportion of one ounce of soda to one gallon (of water)...I have used a weak solution of this same baking soda for cleaning mildew from exhibition specimens on the advice of Dr. S.S.. Sullivan. I know that it removes the mildew, but have never experimented with it in the open." (American Rose Annual, 1922, p.76.)

It is also of interest that at the time, (1922), the common treatment for mildew in this country was "...90 parts of sulphur and 10 parts arsenate of lead." (ARA, 1922, p.79.) -Editor.

## **SPRAY DAMAGE OR DOWNY MILDEW?**

**By Albert Ford**

**(adapted from the September – October 1991 MRS Newsletter)**

The rose gardener who confuses the affects of Downy Mildew and spray damage is not alone; there are many of us who make the same mistake.

I recall a Colonial District meeting in Williamsburg, Virginia, to which a rosarian from this area brought several infected rose stems to find an answer to what was causing the discoloration and dark brown irregular spots and blotches on the stems.

Those in attendance, who ventured an opinion, believed the problem to be spray damage or "pesticide toxicity," but a few people contended that the damage was the result of Downy Mildew. In my opinion, aided by some investigation on my return to Timonium, we were looking at the ravages of Downy Mildew. Even plant pathologists acknowledge it is easy to confuse the two.

An excellent article appeared in the ARS, August, 1991 issue of The American Rose Magazine by John Mattia from Connecticut on Downy Mildew describing how he and other rosarians confused its devastation with that caused by "spray burn."

His solution to the problem, once he convinced himself that the symptoms were caused by something other than his spray and feeding program, was to combine the use of a fungicide Subdue which had been developed to combat Downy Mildew on leafy vegetables. His normal spray program, it appears, already included Funginex which, in my opinion, is useful in controlling Powdery Mildew but not Downy Mildew.

If John's problem rings a bell, read his article and perhaps also Compendium of Rose Diseases on this subject. (p.13)

(The Compendium of Rose Diseases was published in 1983 by The American Phytopathological Society in cooperation with the Department of Plant Pathology, Cornell University.)

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